

**Debris Removal Operational Plan
Environmental Review
St. Tammany and Orleans Parishes
Subsurface Heavy Vessel Removals**

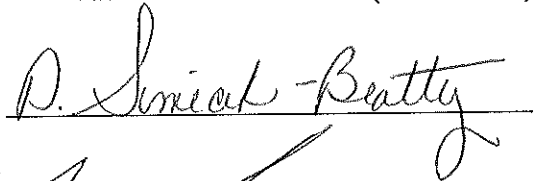
To: Chief, Operations Branch
Sector NOLA Debris Removal Team

From: R. Travis, Chief
USCG District-8 Documentation Support Cell

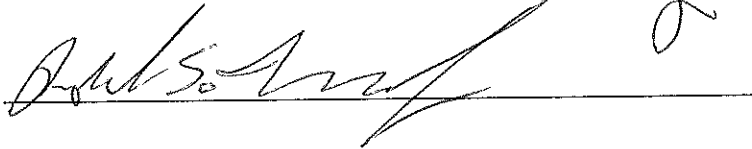
Waterway Number: Various (see Table 1)

Case Number: Various (see Table 1)

NOAA Environmental Unit Reviewer signature, date:



USCG Lead Official signature, date:



Forty-one subsurface vessels are slated for removal in the Canal Communities Saint Tammany and Orleans parishes under a US Coast Guard (USCG) removal contract; though the exact timing of removal operations has not yet been determined.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106: Vessels are to be removed using standard cutting and lifting methods that will have limited disturbance to bottom sediments. Features of historical significance may occur within Fort Canal, Elan Vitale, and Bayou Liberty C in the proximity of vessel targets and could require additional precautions to be taken during operations. USCG Cultural/historic resource consultation and coordination will continue with the LA State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7: Gulf Sturgeon may be present in the general proximity of Lake Saint Catherine and Lake Pontchartrain east of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. If a sturgeon is sighted within 100 yards of the active work zone, special operating conditions should be implemented, including: no operation of moving equipment within 50 feet of these animals, all vessels should operate at no wake/idle speed within 100 yards of the work area, and siltation barriers (if used) should be re-secured and monitored. Once these animals have left the 100 yard buffer zone around the work area on their own accord, these special conditions are no longer necessary but careful operations should be continued. The West Indian Manatee occasionally enter Lake Pontchartrain and associated coastal waters and streams during the summer months (June – September). Manatees are often injured due to collisions with boats and barges – avoid this by limiting speed in waterway (no wake), keep an eye out and stay away if seen in work

area. FWS has provided recommendations to minimize impacts to manatees and sturgeon (see comments).

*****REPORT ANY SIGHTINGS OF GULF STURGEON AND/OR WEST INDIAN MANATEE TO EU LEADER IMMEDIATELY*****

Comments: Restrict removal activities to open water to avoid impacting water bottom or shoreline habitat. USFWS recommends the following actions to avoid impacts to sturgeon:

- Use a spill boom to contain any hydrocarbons released during salvage operations by placement around the salvage site. Upon completion of work any hydrocarbons contained by the boom should be removed prior to removal of the boom and disposed of in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Conduct post-salvage surveys to ensure sufficient debris removal was attained and to avoid need for future debris removal activities.
- Do not temporarily stockpile or off-load salvaged debris in areas below the high tide mark.
- Temporary stockpiles and off-loading areas should have appropriate run-off containment measures to prevent possible contaminated mud or water from returning to Lake Pontchartrain or adjacent water bodies, especially after the spill boom is removed.

Comments: Restrict removal activities to open water to avoid impacting water bottom or shoreline habitat. FWS recommends the following actions to avoid impacts to manatees:

- All contract personnel associated with operations should be informed of the potential presence of manatees and the need to avoid collisions with these animals which are a federally listed endangered species protected under the MMPA and ESA.
- Maintain visual awareness of manatees – watch out and avoid operating in areas where manatees are present.
- Post temporary signs prior to and during all removal activities to remind personnel to be observant for manatees during active operations or within vessel movement zones. At least one sign should be placed where it is visible to the vessel operator.
- Siltation barriers, if used, should be made of material that will not entangle manatees and should be properly secured, monitored, and maintained.
- If a manatee is sighted within 100 yards of the active work zone, special operating conditions should be implemented, including: no operation of moving equipment within 50 feet of a manatee, all vessels should operate at no wake/idle speed within 100 yards of the work area, and siltation barriers (if used) should be re-secured and monitored. Once the manatee has left the 100 yard buffer zone around the work area on its own accord, these special conditions are no longer necessary but careful operations should be continued.

Oysters: Oyster leases are present in Lake Borgne area – review attached map of lease locations prior to transit operations.

The following general provisions apply:

1. All work in the waterways must comply with a "Minimal Disturbance to the Environment" approach. If possible, leave no evidence that you were even there except the debris is gone.
2. Hazardous materials, such as drums or containers containing hazardous materials, representing an immediate and substantial threat will be mitigated as defined in federal and state statutes.
3. Water based operations are the preferred method for recovering debris from the waterway.
4. Debris will be removed by lifting in a traditional manner or by lifting in a non-traditional manner that will not impact the soil below 6 inches.
5. No debris recovery or removal is allowed in public or private oyster lease areas without specific approval and guidance.
6. Access routes and work areas should be clearly defined or marked so operators know where they are permitted to travel/operate safely. Pipelines are a potential hazard in many of the proposed work areas.
7. Minimize disturbance to wildlife and/or habitat (including foraging and nesting areas). Killing or harassing wildlife or damaging nests, dens, or bird rookeries is prohibited and subject to penalties under state and federal law.
8. Consider established hunting seasons and hunting areas for safety when planning operations for safety of workers.
9. Immediately notify the Environmental Unit if dead, stranded or live entangled wildlife are found so that properly trained authorities can be contacted. Do not attempt to free any live entangled animal unless you are trained and have the authority to do so.
10. Periodically check equipment for leaks and make repairs immediately. Any oil, hydraulic fluids or lubricants spilled or discharge must be cleaned up immediately; cleanup equipment must be readily available for use in case a spill occurs. Any spills of petroleum product into a waterway must be reported in compliance with state and federal law.
11. The removal of subsurface and bottom sediment, other than the nominal amounts of sediment which maybe on top of the eligible debris, in a waterway for the purpose of recovering debris or for the access to debris is not authorized. Minimize sediment disturbance.
12. If removal requires disturbing a large quantity of sediment/mud slurry (e.g., pumping mud from vessel, jetting for messenger line etc.), physical barriers, such as silt screen,

should be used to limit spread of material. Consult with Environmental Unit or refer to specific project recommendations.

13. Avoid placing anchors on sub-aquatic vegetation (e.g., eel grass bed).
14. Vessel contractors are restricted from using equipment on the barges to grab the bottom of waterways in the shallows to drag the barge in closer to the waters edge to retrieve debris. Pushing mud with the barge is not allowed. These actions are not allowed under LDNR regulation.
15. Vessels shall be sized such that adequate clearance is maintained between vessels and the sea/river bed at all states of the tide to ensure that undue turbidity is not generated by turbulence from vessel movement or propeller wash.
16. Vessel contractors are restricted as to powering the vessels into shallows of historically sensitive waterways with tug/push boat if this activity disturbs the bottom by churning up or pushing bottom sediments.
17. Sensitive sites, such as pipelines, water control structures, etc. must be avoided unless otherwise authorized.
18. Any unexpected archaeological discoveries found in the course of debris removal, including archaeological artifacts and human remains, shall be reported to the Environmental Unit immediately.
19. Removal of subsurface debris will be confirmed by sonar to ensure safe navigation.
20. Select vehicles and equipment which are least likely to disturb the environment.
21. Minimize the numbers of vehicles used to the extent possible. Maximize use of open water, dikes, existing roads and trails and stay out of undisturbed marsh habitat.

Table 1. Case numbers, location descriptions, waterway numbers, and parishes for vessel removals under the removal contract. For cases with specific EU and/or NHPA concerns are identified (Yes or Review); refer to specific guidance below.

Waterway #	Waterway name	Parish	Case #	EU concern	NHPA status
8233	Chef Harbor Marina	Orleans	3985	No	Proceed
8228	Elan Vitale	Orleans	4038	Yes	Review
8213	Bayou Delesiere	Orleans	4222	No	Proceed
8218	Irish Bayou	Orleans	4225	Yes	Proceed
8218	Irish Bayou	Orleans	4226	Yes	Proceed
8218	Irish Bayou	Orleans	4227	Yes	Proceed
8218	Irish Bayou	Orleans	4228	Yes	Proceed
8228	Elan Vitale	Orleans	4229	Yes	Review
8228	Elan Vitale	Orleans	4230	Yes	Review
8232	Fort Canal	Orleans	4231	Yes	Review
8513	Bayou Melun	St. Tammany	4232	No	Proceed
8519	Bayou Liberty C	St. Tammany	4233	No	Review
8519	Bayou Liberty C	St. Tammany	4234	No	Review
8519	Bayou Liberty C	St. Tammany	4235	No	Review
8519	Bayou Liberty C	St. Tammany	4236	No	Review
8527	Bayou Bonfouca Extension	St. Tammany	4239	No	Proceed
8527	Bayou Bonfouca Extension	St. Tammany	4240	No	Proceed
8530	Facine Canal	St. Tammany	4242	No	Proceed
8217	Venetian Isles Extension	Orleans	4243	Yes	Proceed
8217	Venetian Isles Extension	Orleans	4244	Yes	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4246	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4247	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4249	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4250	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4251	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4252	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4253	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4254	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4255	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4256	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4257	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4258	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4259	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4260	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4261	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4262	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4263	No	Proceed

8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4264	No	Proceed
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4265	Yes	Proceed
8529	Lake Pontchartrain	St. Tammany	4266	Yes	Review
8531	Eden Isles	St. Tammany	4304	No	Proceed

Waterway specific EU guidance (information compiled from Preliminary EU Checklists and subsequent coordination activities)

Elan Vitale (8228), Fort Canal (8232), Irish Bayou (8218), Venetian Isles Extension (8217):

These waterways are in the immediate proximity of the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. Removal activities should be limited to the waterways only – avoid contact with refuge property. Alert the Environmental Unit at the onset of work in these waterways.

Eden Isles (8531), target 4265 only:

This target is located in waterway near marsh habitat in the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. Removal activities should be limited to the waterway only – avoid contact with refuge property. Alert the Environmental Unit at the onset of work to remove this target.

Lake Saint Catherine:

ESI index indicates that a federally Threatened fish (Gulf Sturgeon) may be present year-round near in Lake Saint Catherine at the western end of segment. Also, Lake Saint Catherine is federally-designated critical habitat. Should debris removal activities impact water quality or the physical aquatic substrate within the federally-designated critical habitat, contact the Environmental Unit for species emergency consultation beyond what has already been provided in the USFWS' March 18, 2008 memorandum.

Lake Pontchartrain (8529), target 4266:

This target is located along the shores of the Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.

Removal activities should be limited to the waterway only – avoid contact with refuge property.

Alert the Environmental Unit at the onset of work to remove this target.

Waterway specific NHPA guidance

Fort Canal (8232), Elan Vitale (8228):

These waterways are located near the historic Fort Macomb site. This state owned historic property is at significant risk for damage due to subsidence around the fort (causing a lack of footing) and neglect from lack of historical maintenance. Contact Environmental Unit for further guidance.

Bayou Liberty C (8519):

Historically/archaeologically significant areas are present in the general work areas for this waterway. Contact Environmental Unit for further guidance.

Lake Pontchartrain (8529), target 4266:

Probable sunk shrimper that is barnacled. Contact Environmental Unit for further guidance.